

FALL 2019

HUS 254 Latin America Today The Caribbean: Culture, Power, Aesthetics

TUTH 02:30-03:50PM.

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SBC: DIV; GLO; HUM



The Caribbean holds a singular place within the larger Latin American reality. This course will examine Latin America today from the lens of modern Caribbean literature and culture.

The course is divided into three sections: Postcolonial Caribbean; Revolutionary Islands; and Displaced Bodies. Within these three broad segments, we will discuss the particularities of the Caribbean experience of emancipation; race relations rooted in slavery; economic distress directly traceable to world financial crises as they are reflected in literary and cultural texts; and Caribbean creative expressions, which reflect on the region's capacity for agency and change.

The Caribbean embodies the very concept of a crossroads of cultures and subjectivities, shaped by global economic and social processes stemming from the beginnings of mercantile capitalism in the fifteenth century (including the establishment of the slave trade). The region witnessed two modern events of signal importance, the Haitian Revolution (1791) and the Cuban Revolution (1959). More recently, the financial authority of the global International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as well as a variety of global policies regarding population control, border patrolling, and refugee status, have been played out in the Caribbean. Finally, tourism and its attendant industries have had a long and mostly shameful history in the Caribbean. The region is indispensable for all studies of imperialism and colonialism and for any serious critical attempt to understand both neocolonialism and postcolonialism, of obvious global scope, especially when it comes to migration and diaspora.

While focusing on the literary production of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, we will allude to dialogical exchanges with Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean texts, illuminating key continuities and divergences constitutive of this corpus and addressing race, gender, coloniality, and aesthetics. Authors include Edwidge Danticat, Reinaldo Arenas, Jamaica Kincaid, Fidel Castro, Junot Díaz and Ernesto "Che" Guevara.